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ABSTRACT

In May 1985 a questionnaire was administered to about 2,600 ninth and twelfth grade students representing all of Detroit's (Michigan) public high schools. The purposes of this survey were to facilitate further evaluation of the Uniform Code of Student Conduct Component, and to collect data for a study of high school homework and students' study habits. This report presents results, a mixture of favorable and unfavorable findings, of the homework and study skills study. On the positive side, response data supported conclusions that, on the average, Detroit students spend more time on homework than the national average; that a majority of students do their homework in a quiet place at home, complete most or all of their homework, and have confidence in their ability to study for tests; and that a majority of teachers clearly explain how homework is to be done, correct and grade homework, and return it quite promptly to students. On the negative side, findings provided evidence that too many students do not practice good homework and study habits; and that many high school teachers usually do not explain the purpose of homework, normally give the same homework assignment to all members of their classes, devote very little time to teaching study skills, and are perceived by students to be unwilling to give special help with school work outside of class. (PS)

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# DETROIT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PERCEPTIONS REGARDING HOMEWORK AND STUDY HABITS

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October, 1985

UD 025 576

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DETROIT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PERCEPTIONS
REGARDING HOMEWORK AND STUDY HABITS


## Abstract

In May, 1985 a questionnaire was administered to about 2,600 ninth and twelfth grade students representing all of Detroit's public high schools. A part of the questionnaire facilitated a study of high school homework and students' study habits.

Results were a mixture of positive (favorable) and negative (unfavorable) findings. On the positive side, response data supported conclusions that, on the average, Detroit students spend more time on homework than the national average; that majorities of students do their homework in a quiet place at home, complete most or all of their homework, and have confidence in their ability to study for tests; and that majorities of teachers clearly explain how homework is to be done, correct and grade homework, and return it quite promptly to students.

On the negative side, findings provided evidence that too many students do not practice good homework and study habits; and that many high school teachers usually do not explain the purpose of homework, normally give the same homework assignment to all members of their classes, devote very little time to teaching study skills, and are perceived by students to be unwilling to give special help with school work outside of class.



Evaluation and Testing Department
Office of Instructional Improvement
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# DETROIT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PERCEPTIONS REGARDING HOMEWORK AND STUDY HABITS

## Introduction

Although homework has been the subject of many studies over the past 20 years, there is much disagreement among teachers and school administrators about its educational value. It has been defended as an academic necessity and derided as useless busywork. There are widespread differences of opinion among teachers as to how much of what kind of homework for what purposes is most effective.

Notwithstanding all of this variation of opinion, research clearly supports several general principles regarding effective homework practices. There is good reason, therefore, for a study of the homework habits of Detroit high school students and teachers.

## Purpose and Design of this Study

### Purpose

Early in May, 1985, the "High School Student Questionnaire" was administered to a sample of students representing all 22 of Detroit's public high schools. The two major purposes of this student survey were: (1) to facilitate further evaluation of the Uniform Code of Student Conduct Component, and (2) to collect data for a study of high school homework and students' study habits. This report deals solely with the homework and study skills study.

The purposes of the homework study were: (1) to learn more about the problems of high school students in the areas of study habits and homework, (2) to learn more about strengths and weaknesses in the manner in which homework is handled by Detroit teachers, (3) to learn more about the home conditions related to homework, and (4) to discover

new procedures that may be useful in helping students complete their homework assignments successfully.

Development and Content of the Questionnaire

The section of the High School Student Questionnaire concerning homework and study habits was developed by two Evaluation and Testing Department staff members aided by input from Area G Office (city-wide high school administration) officials.

The content of the homework section dealt with several areas including: (1) the amount of student time spent on homework, (2) students' habits and problems in dealing with homework, (3) study skills proficiency, (4) teacher practices regarding homework assignments, and (5) procedures for helping students with homework. On these matters the questionnaire included 21 mutiple choice items and five open-end questions. The results of the latter will be presented in a supplement to this report.

Sample Selection

At each school (with a few exceptions) three ninth grade and three twelfth grade classes were selected in a manner to represent the different course levels offered. Altogether, there were 130 classes involved in the study, 65 ninth grade classes and 65 twelfth grade classes. The total number of student respondents was 2,628 and of these, 1,303 (49.6 percent) were ninth graders, and 1,325 (50.4 percent) were twelfth graders. The total number of students per school, that participated in the study ranged from a low of 88 to a high of 152.

Administration of the Questionnaires

The student questionnaires were sent to all the high schools on April 26, 1985. They were administered by the regular teachers of the participating classes.

## Multiple Choice Question Results

Reported first in this section are results for a question regarding the amount of time students spend on homework. The remainder of the section presents results for the multiple choice questions. Each question is stated and followed by the number of respondents who answered the question, the number who did not respond, the distribution of responses and a brief discussion of the results.

How many hours a week do you usually spend doing homework after school hours and on weekends?

Total Number of Responses: 2377
Number of Respondents Not Answering This Question: 269

| | Number of Respondents | Mean (Average) Number of Hours per week Spent on Homework |
|---|---|---|
| Grade 9 | 1188 | 8.3 |
| Grade 12 | 1189 | 8.6 |
| Total | 2377 | 8.4 |

| Number of Hours per week Spent on Homework | Percent of Students by Grade | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Grade 9 | Grade 12 | Total |
| 0 | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| 1 to 3 | 13 | 15 | 14 |
| 4 to 6 | 28 | 24 | 26 |
| 7 to 9 | 20 | 17 | 19 |
| 10 to 12 | 21 | 21 | 21 |
| 13 to 15 | 10 | 12 | 10 |
| 16 to 18 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 19 to 21 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| More than 21 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Based on their answers to the above-stated question, ninth grade student respondents spend an average of 8.3 hours per week on homework done outside of school hours, and twelfth graders, an average of 8.6 hours. The data reveal a great deal of variation among students in amount of time spend on homework. About two-thirds reported amounts of time in the ranges of four to six hours (26 percent), seven to nine hours (19 percent), and ten to twelve hours (21 percent). Sixteen percent reported less than four hours and eighteen percent reported more than twelve hours per week.

Question 22. How much of your assigned homework do you complete usually?

Total Number of Responses: 2590
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 56

| | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | None of It | Less than Half | About Half of It | Most of It | All of It |
| 9 | 1% | 5% | 15% | 47% | 32% |
| 12 | 2 | 5 | 15 | 48 | 30 |
| Total | 2 | 5 | 15 | 47 | 31 |

Regarding the question; "How much of your assigned homework do you complete usually?" Seventy-eight percent of all respondents answered Most of It or All of It, 15 percent answered About Half of It, and only seven percent said Less than Half or None of It. There were virtually no differences between the ninth and twelfth grade students with respect to response distributions.

Question 23. How much of your assigned homework do you do at school?

Total Number of Responses: 2593
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 53

| | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | None of It | Less than Half | About Half of It | Most of It | All of It |
| 9 | 11% | 23% | 31% | 26% | 10% |
| 12 | 10 | 24 | 31 | 27 | 8 |
| Total | 10 | 24 | 31 | 26 | 9 |

Approximately one third (35 percent) of the student respondents answered Most of It or All of It to the question, "How much of your assigned homework do you do at school?" Almost a third (31 percent) said About Half of It, and an additional third (34 percent) said Less Than Half or None of It. Differences between the ninth and twelfth grade student respondents were negligible.

Question 24. Do you do your homework in a quiet place at home?

Total Number of Responses: 2594
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 52

| Grade | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | Seldom | About Half The Time | Usually | Always |
| 9 | 9% | 19% | 17% | 38% | 18% |
| 12 | 8 | 17 | 20 | 37 | 18 |
| Total | 8 | 18 | 18 | 38 | 18 |

The majority of all respondents (56 percent) indicated that they Usually or Always do their homework in a quiet place at home. Eighteen percent replied About Half The Time, and 26 Percent said Seldom or Never. Differences between the ninth and twelfth grade respondents were minimal.

Question 25. Do you watch T.V. or listen to the radio while doing your homework?

Total Number of Responses: 2591
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 55

| Grade | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | Seldom | About Half The Time | Usually | Always |
| 9 | 11% | 22% | 15% | 26% | 27% |
| 12 | 10 | 24 | 17 | 27 | 22 |
| Total | 10 | 23 | 16 | 27 | 24 |

About half (51 percent) of the respondents said that they Usually or Always watch T.V. or listen to the radio while doing homework. Sixteen percent indicated About Half The Time, and a third (33 percent) indicated Seldom or Never. A comparison of the responses of ninth and twelfth graders showed only slight differences.

Question 26. Do you have a study schedule plan in which you set aside time each day for homework?

Total Number of Responses: 2581
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 65

| Grade | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | Seldom | About Half The Time | Usually | Always |
| 9 | 36% | 21% | 14% | 18% | 11% |
| 12 | 35 | 26 | 15 | 17 | 8 |
| Total | 36 | 23 | 14 | 17 | 10 |

Approximately six out of ten students (59 percent) acknowledged that they Seldom or Never have a study schedule plan in which time is set aside each day for homework. Fourteen percent indicated About Half The Time, and only 27 percent indicated Usually or Always. Differences between ninth and twelfth grade responses were small.

Question 27. Do your parents show an interest in your homework assignments?

Total Number of Responses: 2583
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 63

| Grade | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | Seldom | About Half The Time | Usually | Always |
| 9 | 5% | 12% | 15% | 23% | 46% |
| 12 | 11 | 17 | 18 | 24 | 30 |
| Total | 8 | 14 | 16 | 24 | 38 |

A relatively high percentage of student respondents (62 percent) asserted that their parents Usually or Always show interest in their homework assignments. Sixteen percent said About Half The Time, and 22 percent said Seldom or Never. Fifteen percent more of the ninth grade than of the twelfth grade respondents reported that their parents Usually or Always show interest in homework assignments.

Question 28. How often do your teachers explain the purpose of homework they assign?

Total Number of Responses: 2579
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 67

| | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | Never | Seldom | About Half The Time | Usually | Always |
| 9 | 9% | 19% | 20% | 24% | 28% |
| 12 | 11 | 22 | 24 | 22 | 22 |
| Total | 10 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 25 |

About half of the respondents (48 percent) felt that their teachers Usually or Always explain the purpose of homework that they assign. However, almost a third (31 percent) said Seldom or Never, and 22 percent said About Half The Time. Eight percent more of ninth graders than of the twelfth graders reported that their teachers Usually or Always explain the purpose of homework they assign.

Question 29. How often do your teachers clearly explain how homework is to be done?

Total Number of Responses: 2581
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 65

| | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | Never | Seldom | About Half The Time | Usually | Always |
| 9 | 3% | 13% | 21% | 32% | 33% |
| 12 | 4 | 13 | 24 | 33 | 26 |
| Total | 4 | 13 | 22 | 32 | 29 |

Six of every ten student respondents (61 percent) replied Usually or Always to, "How often do your teachers clearly explain how homework is to be done?" Twenty-two percent answered About Half The Time, and 17 percent said Seldom or Never. Six percent more of the ninth grade respondents than of the twelfth grade respondents felt that their teachers clearly explain how homework is to be done Usually or Always.

Question 30. How often is your homework corrected and marked so that you find out how you did on it?

Total Number of Responses: 2579
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 67

| Grade | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | Seldom | About Half The Time | Usually | Always |
| 9 | 4% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 36% |
| 12 | 3 | 13 | 22 | 32 | 31 |
| Total | 4 | 12 | 21 | 31 | 33 |

Almost two-thirds of the students (64 percent) responded Usually or Alwsys to the question, "How often is your homework corrected and marked so that you find out how you did on it?" Twenty-one percent stated About Half The time, and 16 percent said Never or Seldom. Differences between ninth and twelfth grade respondents were small.

Question 31. When do your teachers usually return your homework?

Total Number of Responses: 2518
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 128

| Grade | Percent of Responses | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | A Week Later | Within The Week | Next Day |
| 9 | 5% | 24% | 52% | 19% |
| 12 | 5 | 28 | 54 | 14 |
| Total | 5 | 26 | 53 | 16 |

Approximately seven of ten student respondents (69 percent) reported that their teacher usually returned their homework Within The Week or the Next Day. Twenty-six percent said A Week Later, and only five percent said Never. Differences between ninth and twelfth grade respondents were minimal.

Question 32. Do your homework marks usually count as part of your report card grade?

Total Number of Responses: 2508
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 138

| | Percent of Responses | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | Yes | No | Don't Know |
| 9 | 81% | 5% | 14% |
| 12 | 85 | 6 | 9 |
| Total | 83 | 6 | 11 |

A very large percentage of student respondents (83 percent) said Yes to the question, "Do your homework marks usually count as part of your report card grade?" Only six percent said No and 11 percent didn't seem to know. Differences between ninth and twelfth graders were small, but five percent more of the ninth graders indicated Don't Know.

Question 33. How many of your teachers are willing to give students help outside of class time?

Total Number of Responses: 2565
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 81

| | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | None | Few | About Half | Most | All |
| 9 | 10% | 37% | 20% | 21% | 13% |
| 12 | 6 | 31 | 19 | 26 | 18 |
| Total | 8 | 34 | 19 | 24 | 15 |

A sizeable proportion of student respondents (42 percent) indicated that Few to None of their teachers were willing to give students help outside of class time. A nearly equal percentage (39 percent) replied that Most or All were willing to give students such help and 19 percent said About Half. Ten percent more of the twelfth graders than of the ninth graders reported Most or All of their teachers were willing to give students help outside of class time.

Question 34. How often do your teachers give the same homework assignment to all students in the class?

Total Number of Responses: 2566
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 80

| | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | Never | Seldom | About Half The Time | Usually | Always |
| 9 | 6% | 9% | 7% | 17% | 62% |
| 12 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 17 | 63 |
| Total | 6 | 8 | 7 | 17 | 62 |

Eight out of ten respondents (79 percent) replied Usually or Always to, "How often do your teachers give the same homework assignment to all students in the class?" Seven percent stated About Half The Time and fourteen percent said Seldom or Never. There was virtually no variation between the ninth and twelfth grade responses.

Question 35. How difficult is most of the homework assigned by your teachers?

Total Number of Responses: 2524
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 122

| | Percent of Responses | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | Very Easy | Quite Easy | Quite Difficult | Very Difficult |
| 9 | 5% | 44% | 46% | 5% |
| 12 | 4 | 44 | 47 | 5 |
| Total | 5 | 44 | 47 | 5 |

Student responses to the question, "How difficult is most of the homework assigned by your teachers?" were somewhat dichotomous; 52 percent said that assigned homework was Quite or Very Difficult. However, most of those responses were in the Quite Difficult category. Forty-nine percent of the respondents said Quite Easy or Very Easy, but most of those responses were in the Quite Easy category. There were virtually no differences between ninth and twelfth grade respondents.

Question 36. If you have any difficulty with a homework assignment, is there any person or place you can go to or call to get help?

Total Number of Responses: 2483
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 163

| Grade | Percent of Responses Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | 81% | 19% |
| 12 | 78 | 22 |
| Total | 79 | 21 |

In response to the question, "If you have any difficulty with a homework assignment, is there any person or place you can go to or call to get help?" Seventy-nine percent of the student respondents said Yes, and only 21 percent said No. Differences between ninth and twelfth grade responses were small.

Question 37. If there were a phone number you could call to get help on homework assignments, would you call?

Total Number of Responses: 2435
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 211

| Grade | Percent of Responses Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | 85% | 15% |
| 12 | 86 | 14 |
| Total | 86 | 15 |

Eighty-six percent of the respondents answered Yes to the question, "If there were a phone number you could call to get help on homework assignments would you call?" Only 15 percent said No. There were virtually no differences between the ninth and twelfth grade responses.

Question 38. If, at your school, there were a room where students could do homework and get help on it, before or after their classes, how often would you go there?

Total Number of Responses: 2490
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 156

| Grade | Percent of Responses | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Almost Every Day |
| 9 | 5% | 13% | 51% | 31% |
| 12 | 4 | 11 | 55 | 30 |
| Total | 5 | 12 | 53 | 31 |

Regarding the question, "If, at your school, there were a room where students could do homework and get help on it, before or after their classes, how often would you go there?" Thirty-one percent replied Almost Every Day and 53 percent of the students said Sometimes. Only 12 percent said Seldom and five percent said Never. There were only slight differences between ninth and twelfth grade responses.

Question 39. How often do your teachers use some class time to teach study skills (such as taking notes and outlining)?

Total Number of Responses: 2485
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 161

| Grade | Percent of Responses | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Often |
| 9 | 10% | 23% | 35% | 32% |
| 12 | 13 | 28 | 34 | 26 |
| Total | 12 | 25 | 34 | 29 |

Twenty-nine percent of the respondents replied Often, and 34 percent said Sometimes in response to the question, "How often do your teachers use some class time to teach study skills?" One fourth of the respondents (25 percent) said Seldom, and 12 percent said Never. Six percent more of the ninth graders than of the twelfth graders replied Often to the question.

Question 40. How good are you at taking useful notes to help you learn?

Total Number of Responses: 2529
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 117

| | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | Very Poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good |
| 9 | 2% | 3% | 32% | 37% | 26% |
| 12 | 1 | 4 | 28 | 37 | 29 |
| Total | 1 | 3 | 30 | 37 | 28 |

About two-thirds of the students (65 percent) felt that they were Good or Very Good in taking useful notes to help in learning. Thirty percent said Fair and only four percent said Poor or Very Poor. The percents of responses varied very little between ninth and twelfth grade respondents.

Question 41. How good are you at making an outline to help you learn?

Total Number of Responses: 2531
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 115

| | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | Very Poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good |
| 9 | 4% | 9% | 44% | 29% | 14% |
| 12 | 3 | 10 | 38 | 32 | 17 |
| Total | 3 | 10 | 41 | 31 | 16 |

Nearly half of the student respondents (47 percent) felt that they were Good or Very Good at making an outline to help their learning. Forty-one percent acknowledged that they were Fair, only 13 percent said Poor or Very Poor. Six percent more of the twelfth graders than of the ninth graders replied Good or Very Good.

Question 42. How would you rate your ability to study for a test or examination?

Total Number of Responses: 2487
Number of Respondents Not Answering this Question: 159

| | Percent of Responses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | Very Poor | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good |
| 9 | 2% | 5% | 32% | 43% | 19% |
| 12 | 1 | 5 | 34 | 40 | 20 |
| Total | 2 | 5 | 33 | 41 | 19 |

Sixty percent of the respondents rated their ability to study for a test or examination as being Good or Very Good. A third (33 percent) said Fair, and only seven percent said Poor or Very Poor. Differences between ninth and twelfth grade respondents were minimal.

## Summary of Findings

### Amount of Time Spent on Homework

The average amount of time that respondents reported they usually spent on homework after school hours and on weekends was 8.3 hours per week.

### Amount of Homework Completed

Most student respondents (nearly 80 percent) indicated that they usually completed most or all of their assigned homework. (Question 22)

### Doing Homework in School

In response to the question, How much of your assigned homework do you do at school?" approximately one-third (35 percent) replied Most of It or All of It, and 31 percent said About Half of It. (Question 23)

### Student Practices--Homework and Study Habits

The majority of respondents (56 percent) indicated that they Usually or Always do their homework in a quiet place at home, 18 percent said About Half the Time, and 26 percent said Seldom or Never. (Question 24)

Although most of respondents indicated that they usually do their homework in a quiet place, their responses to the question, "Do you watch T.V. or listen to the radio while doing your homework?" appear to be somewhat contradictory.

Fifty-one percent stated that they Usually or Always watch T.V. or listen to the radio while doing their homework, and 16 percent said About Half the Time. (Question 25)

Approximately six out of ten respondents (59 percent) acknowledged that they Seldom or Never have a study schedule plan in which time is set aside each day for homework. (Question 26)

Parental Interest

Most of the student respondents (62 percent) asserted that their parents Usually or Always show interest in homework assignments, although 22 percent said Seldom or Never. (Question 27)

Teacher Practices in Homework Assignments

In regard to the question, "How often do your teachers explain the purpose of homework they assign?" almost half of the respondents (48 percent) felt that teachers Usually or Always explain the purpose of the homework they assign. However, a large percentage (31 percent) said Seldom or Never. (Question 28)

Six of ten respondents (61 percent) replied Usually or Always to the question, "How often do your teachers clearly explain how homework is to be done?" Twenty-two percent answered About Half the Time, and 17 percent said Seldom, or Never. (Question 29)

A sizable percentage of students (64 percent) responded Usually or Always to the question, "How often is your homework corrected and marked so that you find out how well you did on it?" Twenty-one percent stated About Half the Time,

and 16 percent said Seldom or Never. (Question 30)

Approximately seven of ten respondents (69 percent) reported that teachers usually return their homework Within the Week or The Next Day. Twenty-six percent said A Week Later, and only five percent said Never. (Question 31)

A very large percentage of respondents (83 percent) replied Yes to the question, "Do your homework marks usually count as part of your report grade?" Only six percent said No, and 11 percent said Don't Know. (Question 32)

Forty-two percent of the respondents voiced their opinions that Few or None of their teachers are willing to give students help outside of class time. However, a nearly equal percentage (39 percent) said that Most or All are willing to give help. (Question 33)

Apparently many teachers do not recognize individual differences when assigning homework. In response to the question, "How often do your teachers give the same homework assignment to all students in the class?" 79 percent reported Usually or Always. (Question 34)

Respondents seem to be equally split on the difficulty of their assigned homework. In answering the question "How difficult is most of the homework assigned by your teacher?" 52 percent indicated Quite... or Very Difficult. On the other hand, 49 percent said the assigned homework was Quite... or Very Easy. (Question 35)

Help With Homework

Seventy-nine percent of the respondents said Yes to the question, "If you have any difficulty with a homework assignment, is there any person or place you can go to or call to get help?" (Question 36)

The vast majority of the respondents (85 percent) said Yes to the question, "If there were a phone number you could call to get help on homework assignments, would you call?" (Question 37)

Thirty-one percent reported that if there were a room where students could do homework and get help on it, before or after their classes, they would go Almost Every Day. However, the majority of respondents (53 percent) said Sometimes. Only 17 percent said Seldom or Never. (Question 38)

Study Skills

Twenty-nine percent of the respondents stated Often, and 34 percent stated Sometimes to the question,"How often do your teachers use some class time to teach study skills." Thirty-seven percent said Seldom or Never. (Question 39)

More than six out of ten students (65%) felt that they were Good or Very Good at taking useful notes to help in learning. Almost a third (30%) indicated that they were Fair and only four percent said Poor or Very Poor. (Question 40)

Nearly half of the respondents (47%) felt that they were Good or Very Good at making an outline to help their learning. Forty-one percent acknowledged that they were Fair, and 13 percent said Poor or Very Poor. (Question 41)

It appears that most of the student respondents have confidence in their ability to study for a test or examination. Six or every ten respondents rated their ability in this regard as Good or Very Good. A third (33 percent) said Fair and only seven percent said Poor or Very Poor. (Question 42)

## Discussion and Conclusions

Results of this study of homework and study habits include both positive and negative findings. Some findings provide evidence that the majority of students and teachers are handling their homework responsibilities quite effectively. Other findings indicate that too many students and teachers do a rather poor job in regard to their homework roles.

Among the positive inferences which can be drawn from the survey results was that the average amount of time spent on homework by Detroit high school students is greater than the national average.[1]

Other positive inferences based on the results follow.

1. The majority of high school teachers clearly explain how homework is to be done.
2. Most teachers correct and mark homework and inform students on how they do on it.
3. Most teachers usually return students' homework quite promptly.
4. Most students complete most or all of their homework.
5. A majority of students do their homework in a quiet place at home.
6. Most students have confidence in their ability to study for tests.
7. Most students have some person or place to which they can go to get help on homework assignments.

While these positive indications of desirable homework practices are encouraging, there is much room for improvement. Even though majorities of students and staff apparently exercise good homework habits, the data clearly

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[1]Based on the self reports of the respondents in this survey, the average amount of time spent on homework by Detroit public high school students is 8.3 hours per week. According to results of a nation-wide survey by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in October, 1983, the median amount of time for the nation's public high school students was 6.5 hours per week.

suggest that large numbers do not.

Also, on the negative side, the findings clearly support the following conclusions which should be cause for concern.

1. Most Detroit public high school students usually do not use a study schedule plan providing specific times for homework.
2. Many high school teachers usually do not explain the purpose of homework they assign.
3. Many teachers are perceived to be unwilling to give students help with their school work outside of class hours.
4. Most teachers normally give the same homework assignment to all students.
5. Many teachers rarely or never devote any class time to the teaching of study skills.

Although four of every five students reported having some person or place to go to for help on homework, it is noteworthy that 85 percent said "Yes" when asked, "If there were a phone number you could call to get help on homework assignments, would you call?" Also, worthy of note was the finding that over 80 percent of all respondents said they would make use of a room at school where students could do homework and get help on it, before or after their classes, if such a room were available.

## Recommendations

Every high school principal will receive, in addition to this report, an individual school report of survey results based on the responses of student participants from his/her school. It is recommended that each principal share this school report with department heads and see that findings are thoroughly examined for implications for action to address apparent weaknesses in the handling of homework responsibilities by students and staff.

It is further recommended that Office of Curriclum Development and Services staff study city-wide results in order to identify areas of need for improvement and to plan ways and means to assist local school staff efforts to address such

needs. One way to expedite this process would be to proceed as follows.

1. Each Curriculum Development and Services Office department head leads a study of survey results by his/her department staff members.

2. Under the leadership of the head of the Office of Curriculum Development and Services, a meeting of the Office's department heads is held for the purpose of sharing mutual concerns about survey findings and ideas for addressing such concerns.

Although this study concerns high school homework, it has important implications for middle school and elementary school staff, since much can be done to help students learn good homework practices before they reach the ninth grade. It is, therefore, recommended that curriculum administrators at the Area A, B, C, D, E and F offices also study survey results to determine their implications for improving the foundation for effective high school study habits.

Finally, the preceding "discussion and conclusions" section of this report clearly points up a need to provide more and better homework assistance to Detroit's high school students. The question of how best to meet this need should be the primary concern of all who are in a position to act on implications of this study.